

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated November 1, 2006, claims 7, 9-15 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Claims 7, 9-13, 29, 35, 38, 46, 55 and 57 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,899,011 of Brinkman. Claim 54 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brinkman in view of Kump et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,026,603. It was stated that claims 36, 44, 45 and 56 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 14 and 15 were stated to be allowable if rewritten to overcome the Section 112 rejections and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 16-19, 23-28 and 47-53 were allowed. For the reasons advanced below, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are in condition for allowance over the art of record.

Section 112 Rejection

Claim 7 was rejected because there was no antecedent basis for "said distal end of said stem" in line 12. Applicant has revised claim 7 so that the Section 112 rejection is now believed to be moot. As a result, the rejection under Section 112 of dependent claims 9-15 is also moot.

As to dependent claim 21, this claim has been cancelled without prejudice. Accordingly, all of the Section 112 rejections are now believed to be moot.

Independent Claim 7 and Dependent Claims 8-15

Claims 7 and 9-13 were rejected as being anticipated by Brinkman. However, it was stated that claim 14 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the Section 112

rejections and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant takes this opportunity to add the subject matter of claim 14 to claim 7. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 7 is now in condition for allowance over the art of record.

Dependent claims 9-13 which merely further patentably define the detailed subject matter of their parent claim or each other are also believed to be in condition for allowance over the art of record.

Claim 14 has been cancelled. As to claim 15, this claim has been revised to make it depend from claim 7, instead of cancelled claim 14.

Independent Claim 16 and Dependent Claims 17-19 and 23-27

The allowance of these claims is gratefully acknowledged.

Independent Claim 28

The allowance of claim 28 is gratefully acknowledged.

Independent Claim 29 and Dependent Claims 35-39, 43-46 and 54-57

Claims 29, 35, 38, 46, 55 and 57 were rejected as being anticipated by Brinkman. Also, claim 54 was rejected as being unpatentable over Brinkman in view of Kump. It was stated in the Office Action that claim 56 was objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim. This claim was said to be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, applicant has added the subject matter of claim 56 to claim 29. As a result, independent claim 29 is now in condition for allowance.

Dependent claims 35, 36, 38, 39, 43-46, 54, 55 and 57, since they merely depend from claim 29, at least ultimately, are therefore also believed to be in condition for allowance over the art of record.

Independent Claim 47 and Dependent Claims 48-53

These claims were allowed in paragraph 11 of the Office Action. Such allowance is gratefully acknowledged.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all of the pending claims are now in condition for allowance over the art of record. Such allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

FAY, SHARPE, FAGAN,
MINNICH & McKEE, LLP

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Date

Jay F. Moldovanyi
Jay F. Moldovanyi
Reg. No. 29,678
1100 Superior Avenue
Seventh Floor
Cleveland, Ohio 44114
Phone: (216) 861-5582

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